

Economy & Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

11 April 2024

Electric Vehicle Chargepoint Strategy

Ward(s): All

Portfolios: Deputy Leader and Regeneration

1. Aim

- 1.1. In line with the Government's commitment to ban the sale of new diesel and petrol cars from 2035, there is a need to ensure that the borough of Walsall has the necessary charging infrastructure to facilitate the move to electric vehicles (EVs). Walsall Council has developed a draft Walsall EV Chargepoint Strategy (**Appendix A**) that sets out our action plan, including the forecast and target number of on-street and car park-based EV chargepoints for installation across the borough up to 2030.
- 1.2. The Walsall EV Chargepoint Strategy aims to set the direction of government capital funding and investment, whilst supporting the wider strategic direction of the draft Walsall Net Zero Strategy, the Black Country Ultra-Low Emission Vehicle (ULEV) Strategy (adopted by Walsall Council 2022) and the emerging West Midlands Zero Emission Vehicle Strategy.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. It is recommended that committee members note the targets and action plan for EV chargepoint installation up to 2030 in the Walsall EV Chargepoint Strategy, and that consultation responses to the draft strategy are being analysed and will be responded to in due course.
- 2.2. It is recommended that committee members provide feedback and location suggestions for future electric chargepoint installations across the borough.

3. Report detail

- 3.1. The draft EV Chargepoint Strategy sets out the clear, strategic vision for Walsall, aligning to the draft Walsall Net Zero Strategy and We are Walsall 2040. It also regionally supports the Black Country Ultra-Low Emission Vehicle (ULEV) Strategy, that Cabinet adopted in April 2022, and the emerging West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Zero Emission Vehicle Strategy.
- 3.2. It supports the short-term roll out of chargepoints by 2026, and the longer-term strategic roll out of chargepoints to 2030. The focus on 2030 was aligned to the

Government's then commitment to phase out the sale of new cars and light goods vehicles (LGVs) by this date i.e. it was the target date at the time the strategy was drafted. We acknowledge that the date is postponed to 2035 but the strategy continues to focus on delivery by 2030 in line with the need to support our We Are Walsall 2040 ambitions to be lead regionally in carbon sustainability with a net zero economy.

- 3.3. The draft strategy considers evidence-based forecasts for the future need of charging in the borough, including 1,134 standard chargepoints and 153 rapid chargepoints by 2030.
- 3.4. The strategy considers opportunities available on council-owned land for charging infrastructure including on-street, council-owned car parks, schools, leisure centres and community centres. There is also a need to influence the planning system and specify the level of provision required through the Local Plan or Supplementary Planning Document.

Progress to Date

- 3.5. Walsall Council commissioned City Science to develop a draft Walsall Electric Vehicle Chargepoint Strategy in 2023. The draft strategy went to public consultation between 21st February – 20th March 2024. The process to review the public feedback is now underway.
- 3.6. In April 2022 Cabinet delegated authority to the Executive Director for Economy, Environment and Communities to authorise the sealing of deeds and/or signing of contracts and any other related documents, as well as any extension and variation of the contractual arrangements for the On-street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS). ORCS funding will see the delivery of the first 35 public on-street chargepoints in the borough of Walsall this year.
- 3.7. Further funding has been allocated to Walsall for charging infrastructure, as well as the wider Black Country and West Midlands (see the Finance section for more details of funding secured to date). This will kick start the delivery of chargepoint across the borough, but further funding is required, including that of the private sector, to achieve the forecast number required by 2030.

Consultation

- 3.8. In August 2023, City Science led a series of engagement workshops to support the development of the draft strategy. Each workshop had approximately 15-20 attendees. Workshops included:
 - An internal Walsall Council officers' workshop to gather inputs across a range of council departments regarding EV infrastructure attitudes, experiences, constraints, and opportunities in the borough.
 - An external workshop with representatives from other public sector partners including Black Country Transport and West Midlands Combined Authority, key businesses, and the voluntary sector.

- One-to-one interviews with potential EV chargepoint operators to understand the commercial models in relation to the local context.
- 3.9. The draft strategy went to public consultation between 21st February – 20th March 2024. The consultation aimed to understand stakeholders' support for EV chargepoints across the borough and the type of chargepoints Walsall's public and businesses need (slower, cheaper charging or quick rapid charge and go). It also considered if respondents already had access to, or were considering a move to EV.
- 3.10. Consultation was undertaken with the following audiences:
- Portfolio Holder and Ward Councillors - Email distribution of Walsall EV Chargepoint Strategy Briefing Note and face to face briefing with Portfolio Holder.
 - The Public and stakeholders – Online questionnaire and dedicated EV Chargepoint Strategy area on the Council's Walsall Says Commonplace and Walsall Council website, with further circulation of links on social media and via press release.
 - Walsall businesses – Direct email correspondence with key businesses through Walsall Council's Business Engagement Team.
 - Council officers – Internal communications and link to online questionnaire for comments on the draft strategy on Commonplace.
- 3.11. The strategic transport team is currently in the process of reviewing responses to the public consultation. This will be used to shape the final version of the strategy prior to Cabinet approval.
- 3.12. The Walsall EV Chargepoint Strategy Commonplace page will be kept up to date with any future updates to the strategy and delivery of chargepoints. This includes links to future consultation on the roll out of specific chargepoints and locations.
- 3.13. Direct responses are being made in a timely manner to those members of the public and businesses who provided direct email correspondence to the consultation.

4. Financial information

- 4.1. Walsall Council commissioned City Science to develop a draft Walsall EV Chargepoint Strategy using capital funding that was allocated through the 2023-2024 Transport Capital Programme.
- 4.2. The Office of Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) for the On-street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS), Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) funds, and West Midlands City Regional Sustainable Transport Settlement

(CRST) funding, subject to full business case approval through West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), will be used to deliver EV chargepoint infrastructure. This is in addition to wider private sector interest in the investment of chargepoint infrastructure in the borough.

- 4.3. ORCS grant capital funding is for a total of £338,712, covering up to 75% of the total capital costs of installation. The chargepoint operator Wenea and sister company Gamma Energy will provide the remaining 25% of match funding.
- 4.4. West Midlands Combined Authority secured £3,016,582 of LEVI Pilot Capital funding, of which Walsall Council has a provisional allocation of approximately £226,000 for the Pelsall Charging Hub.
- 4.5. Walsall Council has entered a concession contract with Wenea West Midlands Limited for the delivery of the ORCS and LEVI Pilot Capital funding schemes.
- 4.6. LEVI capital funding is for a total of £14.5 million for the West Midlands, including an allocation within this for Walsall Council to be determined. The procurement for chargepoint operators for this funding is in development at a West Midlands level.
- 4.7. The West Midlands CRSTS fund includes an allocation of £7 million for the Black Country for ultra-low emission infrastructure, including EV charging infrastructure in Walsall. This funding is subject to full business case approval by West Midlands Combined Authority.
- 4.8. The council will seek to provide the required match funding, develop the outcomes of the action plan in the Walsall EV Chargepoint Strategy and seek to install additional chargepoints through the 2024-2025 Transport Capital Programme allocation of £118,493.00 (approved at Cabinet in March 2024).

5. Tackling climate change and reducing inequalities

- 5.1. In 2019 Walsall Council declared a climate emergency and in 2022 adopting the West Midlands Combined Authority target to reach net zero carbon emissions across the borough no later than 2041.
- 5.2. Our draft Walsall Net Zero Strategy builds on these climate change pledges, and that of the recently approved We are Walsall 2040 Borough Plan which includes the ambition to have the infrastructure in place to enable residents to smoothly switch to net zero and improve air quality across the borough.
- 5.3. Promoting the uptake of electric vehicles and responding to climate change will help to reduce harmful emissions. The draft Walsall EV Chargepoint Strategy aims to support the draft Walsall Net Zero Strategy and our strategic commitment to tackling climate change impacts in our borough to ensure that Walsall will be a clean and green borough, fit for future generations.

5.4. Sites selected to date in the ORCS programme (the first group of chargepoint installations) support equity of charging infrastructure across the borough, filling the gap created by the private market. LEVI funded sites will provide further equity of sites across the borough, particularly for those without access to off-street parking.

6. Decide

6.1. There are no direct decisions arising from this report.

7. Respond

7.1. The feedback provided by the committee on the strategy will factor into the text of the final strategy document, and the future decision of chargepoint locations across the borough.

7.2. The Walsall Electric Vehicle Chargepoint Strategy is expected to be considered by Cabinet in summer 2024. The Cabinet will be asked to approve the strategy.

8. Review

8.1. The Walsall EV Chargepoint Strategy includes a set of 10 recommendations to accelerate the delivery of EV chargepoints across the borough. These recommendations include targets for delivery of standard and rapid chargepoints, opportunities to deliver on council-owned land and providing a good spatial spread of chargepoints.

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